

FITNESS

Tips for Buying Exercise Equipment

Buying fitness equipment for home workouts can represent a sizable financial commitment as well as a lifestyle change. The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) advises workout "wannabes" to exercise good judgement when evaluating advertising claims for fitness products. Before you buy, the FTC suggests you ask yourself the following questions:

1. What are your goals?

Whether you want to build strength, increase flexibility, improve endurance, or enhance your health, look for a program that meets your personal goal.

2. Will you really use exercise equipment?

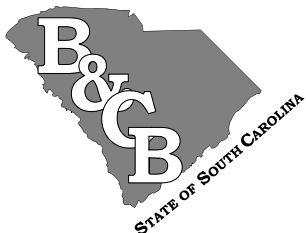
In theory, exercising at home sounds great. But if you don't use a piece of equipment regularly, it can burn a hole in your pocket without burning off any calories.

3. Can you see through outrageous claims?

Exercising regularly can help you shape up. But some companies claim that you can get results by using their equipment for three or four minutes a day, three times a week. Any ads that promise "easy" or effortless results are false.

4. Have you checked the fine print?

Look for tip-offs that getting the advertised results requires more than just using the machine. Sometimes the fine print mentions a diet, or "program" that must be used in conjunction with the equipment. Even if it doesn't, remember that diet and exercise together are much more effective for weight loss than either diet or exercise alone.



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